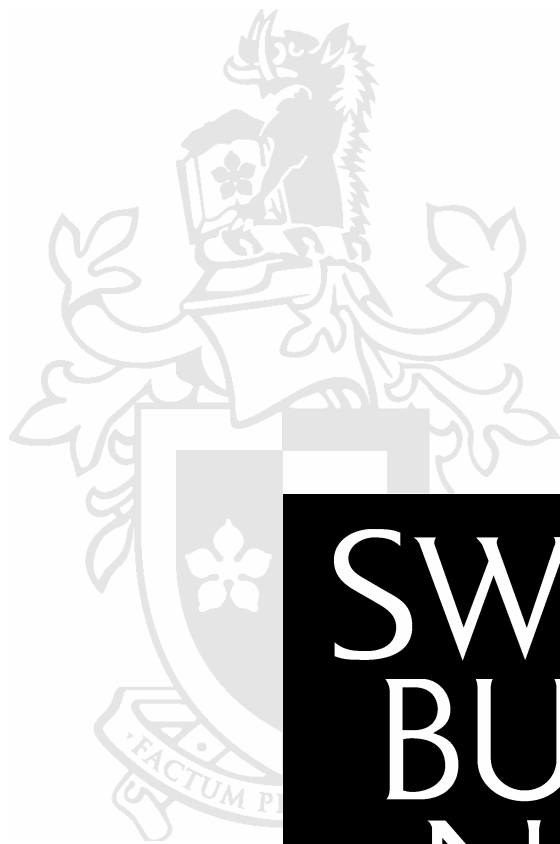


Innovation in Education Unit

Recognition of prior learning

RPL at Swinburne

Information for applicants



SWIN
BUR
NE

SWINBURNE UNIVERSITY
OF TECHNOLOGY
TAFE

Table of Contents

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)	1
Why you should apply for RPL	1
Some terms you need to understand	1
What is competence?.....	1
What is a Training Package?	1
What is a Unit of Competency?	2
Element Performance criteria	3
Applying for RPL at Swinburne	4
Evidence	5
Direct evidence	5
Indirect evidence	5
Personal statements (further information).....	5
How much evidence do you need?.....	6
What about confidentiality issues?.....	6
What is ‘appropriate’ evidence?.....	6
Sample evidence guide.....	6
Workplace Assessment:.....	10
Assessment Interview	11
Underpinning knowledge.....	11
Gap training.....	11
Attending Interviews.....	11
RPL Assessment Outcomes	11
Appealing The RPL Decision	11
Acknowledgement	11

Innovation in Education Unit

TAFE Division

Recognition of Prior Learning at Swinburne

In accordance with the requirements of the Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF), Swinburne University (TAFE) offers students the opportunity to obtain recognition for existing skills and knowledge.

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

RPL is the acknowledgment of skills and knowledge obtained through learning achieved outside the formal education and training system and includes work and life experience including paid and volunteer work and skills attained through leisure pursuits such as musical, mechanical or linguistic abilities.

RPL recognises any prior knowledge and experience and measures it against the qualification in which students are enrolled. The individual may not need to complete all of a training program if he or she already possesses some of the competencies taught in the program.

Why you should apply for RPL

If you apply for RPL and your application is successful you could:

- Eliminate or reduce the need for training in skills and knowledge you already have
- Save time in attending classes and completing unnecessary work
- Save money because you will not have to buy textbooks and learning resources
- Complete your qualification in a shorter time
- More quickly advance to a higher level qualification if you wish.

Some terms you need to understand

It is important to have an understanding of the terms used in order to help you with your RPL.

What is competence?

Competence is the demonstration of skills and knowledge that you have gained through life and work experiences as well as any training that you have successfully completed that can be matched against industry performance standards. Industry performance standards are grouped together to form a qualification, within the Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF). Qualifications and associated standards form part of a National Training Package. Qualifications can be obtained at different levels, ranging from Certificate II to Advanced Diploma level.

What is a Training Package?

Training packages are developed by Australian Industry to identify skills and knowledge that industry requires for you to be able to perform your duties competently. Training packages are nationally endorsed and are made up of core and elective units of competency that clearly state the skills and knowledge required to effectively perform in the workplace.

What is a Unit of Competency?

Courses or qualifications are made up from selected units from a training package. Each unit of competency is divided into **elements** that are a set of activities that lead to an overall achievement or demonstration of competency. Each element is broken down into **performance criteria** at a level of competence the industry requires you to perform in the workplace.

Matching critical evidence against each of the elements/performance criteria will enable you to reach your qualification quicker. For example, the unit *Manage personal work priorities and professional development* (National Code BSBFLM501B) is one of the Units from the Diploma of Business or the Diploma of Frontline Management. The unit is described as:

BSBFLM501B – Manage personal work priorities and professional development

This unit specifies the outcomes required to manage own performance and professional development. Particular emphasis is on setting and meeting priorities, analysing information and using strategies to develop further competence.

At this level, work will normally be carried out using complex and diverse methods and procedures, which require the exercise of considerable discretion and judgement using a range of problem solving and decision making strategies.

The **Elements** for this Unit are:

Establish personal work goals

Set and meet own work priorities

Develop and maintain professional competence

In order to be competent in this Unit of competence, a student needs to demonstrate their ability to perform those elements to the required standard. How a student performs these elements is described in the **Performance Criteria**.

Element Performance criteria

Element	Performance criteria
1. Establish personal work goals	1.1 Personal work planning and organisation serve as a positive role model in the workplace 1.2 Personal work goals, plans and activities reflect the organisation's plans, and own responsibilities and accountabilities 1.3 Individual initiative is taken to achieve and extend personal work goals beyond those planned 1.4 Personal performance is measured and maintained in varying work conditions, work contexts and contingencies
2. Set and meet own work priorities	2.1 Initiative is taken to prioritise and facilitate competing demands to achieve personal, team and the organisation's goals and objectives 2.2 Technology is used efficiently and effectively to manage work priorities and commitments
3. Develop and maintain professional competence	3.1 Personal knowledge and skills are assessed against competency standards to determine development needs, priorities and plans 3.2 Feedback from employees, clients and colleagues is sought and used to identify and develop ways to improve competence 3.3 Development opportunities suitable to personal learning style(s) are identified, evaluated, selected and used to develop competence 3.4 Participation in networks is undertaken to enhance personal knowledge, skills and work relationships 3.5 New skills are identified and developed to achieve and maintain a competitive edge

For example, let us examine the first element of this unit

Element 1. Establish personal work goals

- 1.1 Personal work planning and organisation serve as a positive role model in the workplace
- 1.2 Personal work goals, plans and activities reflect the organisation's plans, and *own responsibilities and accountabilities*
- 1.3 Individual initiative is taken to achieve and extend personal work goals beyond those planned
- 1.4 Personal performance is measured and maintained in varying work conditions, work contexts and contingencies

In seeking RPL for this unit you would need to demonstrate that you already perform these tasks in your work or life experience. Evidence to meet this element of the unit could include job descriptions, performance reviews, reports indicating that you have met targets or KPIs, and documents detailing projects that you have led or worked on that have achieved objectives etc. .Some of the same evidence would also apply to the next two elements for this unit. To receive RPL, you must provide evidence of competence of an entire unit.

Applying for RPL at Swinburne

Briefing	<p>Before deciding whether or not you wish to apply for Recognition of Prior Learning for one or several units of competency, you need to assess your current competence.</p> <p>A Self Assessment Tool will be given to you which will enable an initial assessment of your experience and a check as to whether you will be able to demonstrate the required skills and knowledge. You may choose to discuss this with an RPL Assessor.</p> <p>You must be able to provide evidence to prove that you are competent against the element/performance criteria for the relevant unit(s). It is not enough to state that you have the skills and knowledge required to demonstrate competence.</p> <p><i>NOTE: It is possible to gain RPL for an entire qualification.</i></p>
Enrolment	<p>Once you have decided to apply for RPL for a particular unit(s) you will need to enrol in the course you have chosen. It is important that you notify the administrator of your intention to apply for RPL and nominate the selected units for RPL as this needs to be recorded on your enrolment form.</p>
Planning Interview	<p>You will now need to have an introductory interview with an RPL Assessor who will discuss your Self Assessment with you. You will also be provided with an Evidence Guide, which suggests evidence that could be provided to demonstrate that you are competent in a particular unit or units of competency.</p>
Evidence Gathering	<p>You will need to gather evidence and present it to an RPL Assessor. There are four broad types of evidence that you can collect to show your Assessor.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Direct evidence▪ Indirect evidence▪ Personal statements▪ Interview Assessment <p>More information about evidence follows this section</p>
Assessment Interview	<p>The RPL Assessment interview will now take place. At this time, you and your RPL Assessor will discuss the evidence you have provided. You will be asked questions in order to clarify your understanding, establish your underpinning knowledge and, if necessary, decide upon any gap training that may be required.</p>
Results	<p>This is when your final assessment takes place and the Assessor determines whether or not you are competent. If you are deemed competent for this unit(s), you will not be required to attend class or submit further work FOR THIS UNIT(S). If you are not deemed competent, your assessor will discuss the options with you.</p>

Evidence

Evidence is information which, when matched against the elements and performance criteria of a unit of competency, provides proof of competence. Evidence can take many forms and can be gathered from a number of sources. Evidence may be 'direct, or 'indirect'.

Direct evidence

This is work produced by you which might include:

- Correspondence you have written (letters, faxes, emails)
- Diary notes
- Completed work programs
- Drawing/plans you have created
- Bookkeeping or other records you have maintained

Direct evidence is anything that you have produced yourself or for which you have been primarily responsible. Providing various examples of evidence that you have produced over a period of time is recommended.

Direct evidence will need to be verified by your supervisor as your own work. Your assessor may phone your supervisor to check verification.

Indirect evidence

This is information about you which might include:

- Certificates/statements of results you have completed
- Minutes of meetings that contain information that you have participated or performed duties
- Your position description
- Performance appraisals
- Letters of appreciation from clients or work colleagues
- References from previous employers
- Workplace awards, prizes, certificates
- Witness testimony or third party reports
- Photographs/recordings of activities you have undertaken
- Statements from your managers, supervisors, previous employers, customers and colleagues can be included in your evidence portfolio to support your claims. These are not references from previous employers but statements of information that are relevant to an element and performance criteria for the unit of competency.
- Reports are from managers or supervisors who have witnessed specific activities you have undertaken that meet performance criteria/s.

Personal statements (further information)

Personal statements give you the opportunity to explain your evidence and can help you to highlight your personal knowledge and understanding of a particular job/position and the actions required to carry out that role.

Your personal statements should include:

- A brief description of the situations and/or circumstances in which you carried out the activity/work
- Details of the activity/work
- Explanation of the planning and factors that contributed to the outcomes of the activities/work, for example how, why, when and the outcome

How much evidence do you need?

The quality of your evidence is more important than the quantity of evidence that you provide. Although direct evidence is more valid than indirect evidence your assessors will expect to see a variety of evidence. Whilst a single piece of evidence may be relevant to meet the performance criteria of one or more elements, you may be required to demonstrate your competency via a range of examples.

Please note: Do not send or include originals of certificates, awards, pieces of work etc however you may be asked to present them at an interview. You are encouraged to make photocopies of any documents that you submit and retain a copy of all pieces of evidence submitted.

What about confidentiality issues?

It is important that sensitive information is not included in your evidence portfolio. You may need authorisation to use some of your evidence so check the privacy and confidentiality policies of your organisation. Client names should be deleted and financial figures etc. or other personal details blacked out and made unidentifiable.

What is 'appropriate' evidence?

Your evidence must be relevant to the unit of competency. You will need to show that you have the required skills and knowledge for the unit by providing evidence which meets the standards identified in the performance criteria for the unit.

Check that your evidence:

- meets the performance criteria for the units of competency.
- shows that you have the skills and knowledge required
- is current
- is authentic (it is your own work and you have put the portfolio together)

If you find that your evidence meets some of the performance criteria but not all of it, you may be able to fast track through the rest of the elements or undertake gap training or assessment. Your assessor will speak to you about this.

Sample evidence guide

On the following pages, you will find a sample Evidence Guide which contains all of the Elements and Performance Criteria, together with some suggestions for evidence that could provide proof of competence in those criteria.

TBSB50101	Diploma of Business (8 units required (at least 7 at AQF5 and up to 1 at either AQF4 or AQF6))		
	<p>At the Diploma level, work will normally be carried out using complex and diverse methods and procedures which require the exercise of considerable discretion and judgement, using a range of problem solving and decision making strategies.</p> <p>Suggested evidence has been included to give you an idea of what evidence might look like for this Unit of Competence.</p>		
Competency	BSBFLM501B Manage personal work priorities and professional development		
Elements	Performance Criteria	Evidence might include:	Competent
1. Establish personal work goals	1.1 Personal work planning and organisation serve as a positive role model in the workplace	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Copy of organisation's goals and objectives ▪ Copy of your personal goals and objectives that relate to organisation's goals ▪ Piece of work that links to workplace goals ▪ Copy of work completed that is of a high standard ▪ Email/Letter/article commending you on some work or action e.g. plan developed, on time work, workplace award, work beyond that required or done in difficult circumstances etc ▪ Copy of attendance record ▪ Performance appraisal ▪ Manager endorsement 	
	1.2 Personal work goals, plans and activities reflect the organisation's plans, and own responsibilities and accountabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Copy of To Do list/diary page showing how prioritise work ▪ Copy of personal, team and organisation's goals and objectives ▪ List of recurring tasks ▪ Copy of your Outlook calendar ▪ Copy of regular email use ▪ Coy of G Drive filing organisation ▪ Manager endorsement 	
	1.3 Individual initiative is taken to achieve and extend personal work goals beyond those planned		
	1.4 Personal performance is measured and maintained in varying work conditions, work contexts and contingencies		
2. Set and meet own work priorities	2.1 Initiative is taken to prioritise and facilitate competing demands to achieve personal, team and the organisation's goals and objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Copy of performance appraisal ▪ Copy of job description and performance criteria 	
	2.2 Technology is used efficiently and effectively to manage work priorities and commitments		

Elements	Performance Criteria	Evidence might include:	Competent
3. Develop and maintain professional competence	3.1 Personal knowledge and skills are assessed against competency standards to determine development needs, priorities and plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Copy of development/learning plan ▪ Email(s) seeking/giving feedback ▪ Copy of training record ▪ Emails/letter confirming training attendance ▪ Manager verification that acted as Manager for 4 weeks, offered to undertake new area of work so as personal skills were developed ▪ Self assessment of how well you managed in acting management role ▪ Minutes of network meeting showing your attendance ▪ Emails from network ▪ Tennis club minutes showing your finance report ▪ Example of work or development that arose from a network contact ▪ Example of work that highlights new skill 	
	3.2 Feedback from employees, clients and colleagues is sought and used to identify and develop ways to improve competence		
	3.3 Development opportunities suitable to personal learning style(s) are identified, evaluated, selected and used to develop competence		
	3.4 Participation in networks is undertaken to enhance personal knowledge, skills and work relationships		
	3.5 New skills are identified and developed to achieve and maintain a competitive edge		

EXAMPLES OF EVIDENCE

Remember that a single piece of evidence can be used to meet more than one performance criteria in any unit. Following is a list of types of evidence that can be used and will help the assessment of your portfolio. Include anything that you feel is relevant and will help you to meet the performance criteria.

- Resume, Curriculum Vitae
- Job/Position Description
- Certificates/Qualifications
- Statements of Attainment
- Units of competence
- Memos (you have drafted)
- Letters (you have drafted)
- Pro-formas / forms you use
- Fax messages
- Procedures/Policy
- Organisational Chart (with names)
- Reports you have drafted
- Schedules
- Diary entries
- Email correspondence
- Copy of daily 'To do list'
- References from supervisor/peers
- Letters of support/appreciation
- Completed job cards
- Drawings/plans you have created
- Spreadsheets
- Performance appraisals/review
- Training Diary
- References from previous employers
- Workplace awards, prizes, certificates
- Witness testimony or third party reports
- Statements from supervisors/peers
- Witness testimonies
- Assessment tools you may have used
- Role plays
- Budgets/costing sheets etc
- Department documents
- Standards used
- Booking sheets
- Workplace evidence
- Confidential documents / privacy
- Scripts
- Records
- Team meeting notes
- Training needs analysis/goals/session plan
- Evaluation forms
- Forums/meetings/conferences/seminars you have helped organise
- Brochures/Flyers you have produced
- Promotional material
- Handouts/samples
- Kits/induction tools
- Feedback sheets/ surveys
- Checklists
- Outline of the organisation that you work for
- Letter/s of validation
- Samples of work
- Review of logbooks
- Team projects (outlining your roles)
- Notation's made on documents
- Minutes of meetings (that involve you doing an action with a result) and Agendas
- Bookkeeping/other financial records you have set up/maintain
- Video recordings / photographs of you undertaking activities
- Personal statements written by you about you (opportunity to explain in detail your activities, explain planning process, decision making, outcomes etc)

Workplace Assessment:

Often a visit to a candidate's workplace can be the most effective and efficient method of assessing an RPL application. It provides the opportunity for the candidate to describe and demonstrate the job function on the job.

The assessor can access and view additional forms of evidence if required which further develops the picture of competence. Authentication of the candidate's work can also be obtained by their supervisor's which is an essential aspect of RPL.

How do you present your evidence?

You should present your evidence portfolio to the RPL Assessor after you have collected your evidence for your application. Your portfolio should contain:

The evidence that you have collected	Your evidence must be matched to specific elements. Please remember that a piece of evidence can be used for more than one element. Evidence can be presented in any format: Do not include original documents as part of your portfolio. You may be required to present them at an interview.
RPL Evidence Summary	A summary of evidence will help you and your Assessor keep track of the evidence collected as one piece of evidence will often relate to more than one element or performance criteria. Especially if you are seeking RPL for more than one unit, an evidence summary will allow you to refer to the evidence across a range of competency elements. All evidence should be labelled clearly with a number. You need to fill out the RPL Evidence Summary page indicating the unique number for that piece of evidence and which elements it relates to. Eg. Document 1 relates to Element No 1 Performance Criteria 01.1, 01.3 etc. Document 1 relates to Element No 2, Performance Criteria 02.4, 02.5 etc.

It is important that your evidence portfolio is complete, sequenced and organised clearly. A summary should be included at the front of your portfolio of evidence. It is recommended that you use a folder with plastic sleeves. Please keep a copy of your portfolio yourself so that you may refer to it if your assessor rings you for clarification.

Evidence No.	Evidence	Performance criteria
1	Recognition award	1.1, 1.2, 3.1, 4.5
2	Achievement awards.	1.1, 1.2, 2.2, 2.3, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4,
3	360 Feedback.	4.5,
4	Performance Review.	1.1, 1.2, 3.1, 4.5
5	Performance Planning.	2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 3.1, 3.2

At the end of this guide you will find a blank Evidence Summary Sheet that you can copy and use, or you can download it from the website at <http://www.tafe.swinburne.edu.au/i2e/rpl.html>

Assessment Interview

Once you have collected your Evidence, it needs to be reviewed by the RPL Assessor to ensure that the evidence does in fact provide sufficient evidence to match all of the elements of the Unit or Units. The next step is the Assessment Interview where the assessor can discuss the evidence, ask questions and identify any elements requiring gap training or further information.

Underpinning knowledge

During your assessment interview you will be asked to provide answers to oral questions that allow the assessor to ensure that you have the underpinning knowledge required to meet the elements/performance criteria.

Underpinning knowledge is important in that you are only competent in your knowledge when you understand not only what you are doing but why you are doing it. You may also be required to explain how the role could be performed in a different context/organisation.

Gap training

If it is identified that further evidence or gap training is required, then a final Assessment Interview will be scheduled. It may be deemed necessary to ask you to perform an activity or undergo a test to provide evidence of competence in elements/criteria that are lacking evidence. It might be necessary to undertake training, read sections of the required text book etc to ensure that you have all the required skills and knowledge to be deemed competent.

Attending Interviews

It is important that you attend all scheduled assessment interviews with the required evidence or information. If you are unable to attend for some reason, you should contact the RPL assessor to reschedule the appointment, as failure to attend interviews and provide information may result in an assessment outcome of RPLN.

RPL Assessment Outcomes

You will be advised by the RPL Assessor of the outcome of your RPL submission once all evidence and interviews have been completed. If you are successful, your result will be recorded as RPLC meaning Competent for RPL. If you are unsuccessful your result will be RPLN, meaning Not Competent for RPL. There will not be a graded result for RPL.

Appealing The RPL Decision

Applicants have the option of appealing the RPL decision if they wish. For more information about the appeals process, go to: <http://ppd.swinburne.edu.au/stuinf/default.htm>

Acknowledgement

Information included in this document is based on a booklet produced by Central Gippsland Institute of TAFE as part of an OTTE funded project and developed by the Department of Administration and Business Technology at Swinburne TAFE.

Thanks to the staff of Central Gippsland TAFE and the Department of Business Administration and Business Technology at Swinburne TAFE.

Evidence Summary Sheet

Evidence No.	Evidence	Performance criteria
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		
9		
10		
11		
12		
13		
14		
15		
16		
17		
18		
19		
20		
21		
22		
23		
24		
25		
26		
27		